

12-15-2008

The Portland Spectator, December 2008

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/spectator>

Recommended Citation

Portland State University. Student Publications Board, "The Portland Spectator, December 2008" (2008). *Portland Spectator*. Book 35.
<http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/spectator/35>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Portland Spectator by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. For more information, please contact pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

the portland
Spectator

PSU Culture



December 2008, Volume 7, Issue 3

the portland Spectator

The Portland Spectator believes that the academic environment should be an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent conservative arguments to be heard. The current environment of political correctness, political fundamentalism and mob mentality stifles genuine political debate. We encourage the expression of diverse ideology to promote thought-provoking discussions.

Dear Readers,

I want to congratulate our country on their dedication to our political system this election cycle. On November 4th, an estimated 126.3 million people participated in the Presidential vote.

A highly anticipated campaign resulted in an impressive voter turnout. Some critics are concerned that the number should have been higher, but I implore you to look beyond the numbers and into the meaning of this turnout.

Criticized as a lazy nation, our voters not only showed up to vote, but they became engrossed in the political atmosphere. Facebook applications allowed voters to see how many of their friends had voted, and a total 5,447,875 people told the social networking site that they took their decision to the ballot box this year. Parties were held indoors, around televisions broadcasting CNN, and in our very own Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Whether or not your candidate won, the important thing to recognize is that our country – our citizens – do care, and are becoming more invested in the workings of their government.

-Sarah J. Christensen

Dear Readers,

Too often people have referred to the free-market as an ideological position existing within an almost religious framework. It is an unfortunate state of affairs when the people that boast such a perspective struggle to explain the difference between Keynesian Liberalism and Monetarism. It is this blind alignment that has crippled our nation's historic ability to reinvent itself and adapt to the evolution of human affairs.

America, along with other OECD countries, is in the fortuitous position of being able to bail out a failing financial market and invest in human capital despite a grossly expanding budget deficit. It is time for Americans to leave behind their predispositions and embrace a thorough cleansing of the economic system. Regardless of political orientation, race, religion, or sex, Americans must unite in support for our new and capable president so that our great nation "...shall not perish from the earth."

-Matthew J. Keenen

Dear Readers,

It is nothing short of exciting to be alive at the turning of this new chapter in American history. The election of Senator Barack Obama to the office of the President of the United States is an achievement almost completely lacking in historical precedent. However you may feel about the man, we must all appreciate the opportunity to someday tell our grandchildren that we were alive to see the famous day frequently recounted in their history textbooks and civics classes.

For those of us who did not vote for him, it is now time to set aside our campaign fervor and gladly take our place behind the next leader of our nation. We should consider it an indignity that some have taken to vehemently protesting President-elect Obama's victory – and not just with the age-old "Don't Blame Me" paraphernalia, but with racial slurs and even public mutilation of our nation's flag. One should not bother with the ballot at all if one cannot acknowledge the possibility of defeat. Our hope should not be that blunders and failures eventually vindicate our decision not to vote for Barack Obama, but that the future will prove our decision wrong – the more wrong, the better.

Mr. President-elect, I did not vote for you; but I am at your service and I look with humble hope to your coming legacy. Let us make this nation great.

-Mikel McDaniel

Editor - In - Chief	Senior Editor	Marketing Manager	Copy Editor	Staff Writer
Sarah J. Christensen	Matthew Keenen	Vincent Berretta	Mikel McDaniel	Kelly Welch
Contributors				
Rebecca Rudawitz	Jeremiah Hoffman	Lane Thompson	Claudiu Lodromanean	Samantha Berrier
Jolene Johnson	Sarah Finn	Tessie Lopez	Jen Newberry	Michael F. DeVietro
Tessie Lopez	Jen Newberry	Keith Moore	Robert Reece	
<p>The Portland Spectator is published by the Student Publications Board of Portland State University. It is funded through incidental student fees, advertisement revenue, and private donations.</p> <p>All essays and commentaries herein represent the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the staff.</p> <p>The Portland Spectator accepts letters to the editor and commentaries from students, faculty and staff at</p>		<p>Portland State University. Please limit your letters to 300 words when possible.</p> <p>We reserve the right to edit material we find obscene, libelous, inappropriate or lengthy. We are not obliged to print anything to which we do not consent. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope. Submission constitutes testimony as to the accuracy.</p>		<p>Copyright 2008. The Portland Spectator. All rights reserved.</p> <p>The Portland Spectator: P.O. Box 347, Portland, OR 97207. Located in SMSU S29. 503.725.9795 spectate@pdx.edu www.portlandspectator.pdx.edu</p>

Culture of PSU

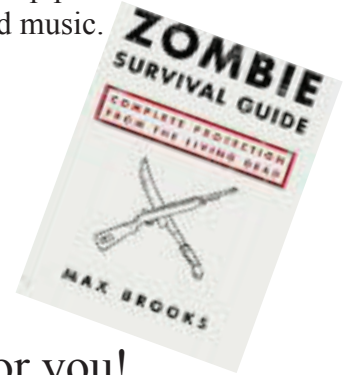
6 V's Page

Vincent takes pot-shots at the traditional Christmas gift.



12 Media You Need

Kelly lists off her top picks for movies, books and music.



13 The World in Soccer

Sarah Finn reviews Franklin Foer's book; *How Soccer Explains the World*.

9 Resources for you!

Fitness writer shares the secrets of the Stott Center.



Opinion

2 Letters From Our Editors

The editors take a time out to share their thoughts on the election.

5 Americans first Republicans Second

Jeremiah touts Americanism.

7 From the Mind of Kelly

Kelly takes a look at the next generation of conservatives.

10 Literacy in America

Is our educational system a failure?

11 Highroad of Politics

Michael looks at what bi-partisanship can accomplish.

14 Vulgarity in TV and Film

Keith Moore shows his disdain Hollywood's use of vulgarity and violence.

15 Dis-Unity in our parties

Our writer looks at the power of failure.

News

4 Romeo Sosa

The success story of a Guatemalan activist.

8 Oregon's Smoking Ban

What this really means for your rights.

A PORTLAND VOICE FOR THE NEW LABOR MOVEMENT

Romeo Sosa comes from a family of farmers. Guatemalan *campesinos* to be exact; people who “lived off the land”. But when civil war reached the countryside, bloody and drawn-out by the late nineteen eighties, the indiscriminate slaughter meant flee or be killed, and Sosa left his property, seeking work in the city.

Many years later, the five foot three Mayan sits in a stark meeting room filled with threadbare couches, walls empty save for a large stencil of Che Guevara. Sosa’s scuffed jeans, white tee shirt and laid-back, friendly demeanor don’t scream “executive director”, but that is exactly what he is: the head of Portland’s worker’s rights project, VOZ. The word “voz”, the organization’s namesake, means “voice” in Spanish, and Sosa, along with the other members of the group, work daily to give day laborers, or *jornaleros*, just that - a voice. As day laborers become more and more visible, VOZ occupies a precarious space on a hot issue - and Sosa is the organization’s poster boy.

Growing up, Mr. Sosa spoke a local dialect of Mayan, and helped his parents growing beans and corn. A “forced vegetarian”, his family didn’t have

Orchestrating services from social work to balanced meals, the job at St. Francis rekindled Sosa’s passion for the underdog.

access to meat most of the time. With a characteristic sparkle in his eye, Sosa tells the story of his brother and him trying to decide what to eat for dinner. “What will we do, all we have to eat is tortillas, so we would, how do you say, *fry* tortillas and then eat tortillas with tortillas.”

Mrs. Sosa, Romeo’s mom, didn’t want her
4 sons to leave the farm, but Romeo felt he had no

choice. The thirty-year long civil war, which ended in 1996, was in full force when the boy reached maturity. His first job outside of the farm was at a non-profit called Materiales Mayas. There, Sosa was responsible for drawing educational materials. The drawings were presented throughout Guatemala in order to help underprivileged campesinos to understand the larger political, social, and cultural contexts in which they lived. Concerning his reasons for going into business with Materiales Mayas, Sosa says, “it’s very important to understand why we are where we’re at now.” The weight he puts on this type of comprehension is a string seen throughout the seams of Sosa’s life.

Since coming to the United States in 1990 as a political refugee, Sosa has done just about every job in the book. At the end of the harvest season in California, where he picked tomatoes, watermelons, and grapes, Sosa joined a friend headed for the Pacific North-West. His first job in the area was picking blackberries; “that’s a really hard job, at the end of the day a little bit of the spine was underneath your skin.” After occupying positions from janitor, to factory worker, to burger cook, Sosa returned to the non-profit sector when the position of executive director at St. Francis Dining Hall opened up. Orchestrating services from social work to balanced meals, the job at St. Francis rekindled Sosa’s passion for the underdog.

Today Mr. Sosa does “everything” at VOZ. The day labor hire site opened that June 13th, 2008 at 240 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and is one of many pots that Sosa currently has on the burner. Meeting with city, state and national officials; running classes from English, to guitar, to theatre; and staging protests – like the one last Tuesday at the Wells Fargo building – are just some of the things that Mr. Sosa does every day. Supported by a staff of paid and volunteer workers, ranging from college students to trained social workers, Sosa endeavors to get day laborers the recognition they deserve. In the face of anti-immigration activists, Sosa does his best to

humanize the struggle; “what really a day laborer is, is a worker, a father, a son, an uncle, he’s trying to feed a family.”

In the name of giving back, Romeo Sosa hopes to work increasingly closer with the media as well as lawmakers to get jornaleros, regardless of their immigration status, included into labor laws. The abuses that day laborers face, 43 cases of non-

payment of wages last year alone, are all too familiar to Mr. Sosa, and he is doing what he can to protect this valuable part of American society. As Sosa explains it, smiling and soft-spoken, “there are realities out here happening” and “we cannot shut up any more.”

Lane Thompson is a volunteer writer for the Portland Spectator and a current student at PSU. She can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu.

Americans First, Republicans Second

The popular Comedy Central show *South Park* recently explored a hyperbolic vision of our nation in the days leading away from the 2008 presidential election. Obama supporters partied like a scene from *Animal House*, and the Republicans built caves in which to survive the social revolution accompanying Obama’s ascension. While the episode was characteristically ridiculous, there is nevertheless a keen insight within the parody.

Obama supporters view him as all that is good about their party. They see him as a way out of the Bush years. Predictably, most Obama supporters do not realize the last 8 years have showed growth in most sectors. And what is more, the President does not have a master button for fixing the economy. The current problem with GM and Ford has more to do with mismanagement, greedy union bosses, and a failure to appropriately reinvest. In other economic sectors, the housing crisis can be partly blamed on the Clinton Administration and the mismanagement of 2004, which deregulated some lending practices, allowing loans to be given to low

income earners who could not afford the houses. In some cases, buyers got their loans approved by lying on application forms – inflating their listed income to reach the 60/40 income-to-debt ratio required.

The current state of our party system in America raises concerns. Democrats and their

We cannot be a white, rural party and submit to a knee-jerk endorsement of Sarah Palin as the simple answer to all our problems.

supporters blindly call Bush the worst President in history. What about Nixon and Clinton, who both lied under oath? Or Old Hickory, who oversaw the slaughter of Native Americans? Most say the President lied about the war in Iraq in order to pursue the security of oil resources. But history may yet vindicate the motives behind the President’s foreign policy.

Bush states that Iraq should be free from tyranny. The

Democratic Party platform states that we should not discriminate and that all people should be free. Clinton did not hesitate when white people were dying in the former states of Yugoslavia. Granted, the UN was behind them, but the Democratic Party’s only stated reason for not supporting the current war is that Bush lied. On the other hand, President Bush has greatly increased our aid to other countries, in particular the billions given to Africa to battle AIDS. The statements by some liberal commentators that Arabs cannot live in a democratic society remind me of the racists who insisted that African-Americans could not survive under freedom. I give you one example to the contrary - Barack Obama.

The Republican Party is not free of its problems either. We cannot be a white, rural party and submit to a knee-jerk endorsement of Sarah Palin as the simple answer to all our problems. Mitt Romney has much more experience and deserved the post much more than Palin. Obama and the Democrat majorities in Congress are going to have a very tough time when they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11...



Perfect Holiday Gifts

"That's it. I'm leaving you, Ted!"

"Well get on with it, woman!"

"The kids and I are going to my mother's."

"It's about goddamn time!"

We've all heard this conversation before, and it usually signals the start of the holiday season. Mother is in tears while Dad teeters atop a ladder, struggling to maintain balance, throwing debris down at your face because you can't untangle the lights fast enough or bring him a beer without spilling a little on the way up, leaving you to wonder whether or not he should even be drinking up there. Your mother said he shouldn't, and you can't bear to get hit with the wooden spoon again.

But now we're all grown up and we have relationships of our own, and we've learned why sometimes Mom had to go away for a couple of days and why Dad would often sob uncontrollably before running into the bedroom and pretending to be asleep just as Mom pulled up into the driveway.

And if we've learned anything at all, we've learned that you don't neglect your partner's holiday gift. Whether you pray to

6 a heathen god or to Our

True Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, come that special day, if you haven't scrounged up at least a half-assed effort, you might as well gift yourself a sixer of Camo 9090 and join me at the Magic Gardens.

Alas, fear not! This doomsday scenario can be avoided, and I have a few gift ideas that are bound to make your mate giddy with joy.

Let's start with a real nice gift for that special girl you've got. Avert your eyes, ladies - unless you want to spoil the surprise!

We all know that women go crazy over that emaciated and drug addled hipster-god Mickey Avalon and getting a ticket to his concert would be a great gift. Unfortunately, he won't be back in Portland for awhile, and you don't want to purchase a ticket so far in advance that he might overdose in the meantime. Why not do the next best thing? I advise you put your girl in a really slutty outfit - something she may have worn to the concert anyway - liquor her up real good and take her under the Burnside Bridge. Offer a hit of the dopest crystal to whomever is willing to make himself her "Mr. Right" for the evening. Who knows, it might fester into a perennial gift that she can enjoy year after year.

Now fellas, don't think you're being neglected here. I've got

an equally good gift for you. Ladies, attention please.

As it usually happens, during the course of a relationship things are bound to become pretty stale. You may sometimes catch your boyfriend looking at other girls, not treating you like he used to, and feel a general malaise regarding the whole deal. But don't worry, this gift should be good for the both of you as it will boost your self esteem and arouse feelings in him that he may never have experienced. My suggestion, ladies, is that you make a sex tape to give to him this holiday season. Of course you can't make it with him because he would know about it and that would ruin the surprise. I recommend choosing a close friend of his - preferably his best friend - in order to guarantee that he will like all the film's actors. And don't be afraid to try new things. He'll be excited about your bravado and I'm sure the relationship will never be the same.

Well there you have it: the perfect gifts. There's no need to thank me, the pleasure I get from helping other people enjoy the holidays like I do is thanks enough. Happy Holidays!

Vincent Berretta is the Distribution & Marketing Director for the Portland Spectator and a student at PSU. He can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu



From the mind of Kelly

by Kelly Welch

The Conservative Culture: How to Build a Base Again

John McCain is a serious politician. His experience in the Senate, his firsthand knowledge of the horrors of war, and his high profile in the U.S. political dialogue should have been enough to propel him into the Oval Office come January. Sadly, as Richard Nixon learned when debating John F. Kennedy in 1960, the public responds dramatically to image.

Barack Obama, with his charisma and (relative) youth, captured the vote in a way the GOP could not combat. The youth of the United States sees Republicans, as well as conservative values, as old, tired, and lacking relevance. The issue, however, may be more the messenger, or message delivery system, than the message itself.

The next generation of any political party depends on a few different factors. The political leanings of a family in which a child grows up have a significant amount of influence. Their socioeconomic status, geographic location, and access to media all have a bearing on the political decisions they make. But, as should be very apparent, by the time a voter casts their first ballot, they have been bombarded by advertising and likely suffered damage to their average attention span. John McCain himself could not keep up, but the GOP could have packaged him differently to appeal to undecided and young voters.

The appearance of Sarah Palin in the political realm seemed to be an attempt to build a bridge between the youth that voted this year and the candidate at the helm of the Republican ticket. Although a younger political figure with energy and an attention-getting personality, Palin's character seemed to emerge in a disjointed way, becoming more a butt of jokes than the conservative version of an Obama-like figure.

The Republican Party needs to begin showing how the conservative messages they promote are relevant to people just coming out of high school. Most of the concerns that the McCain campaign focused on appealed to the "average American," a figure most likely between the ages of 35 to 65, already married and a homeowner with children. It

will be the children of the "average American" that are voting in 2012, and they will flock to the party that includes them in the dialogue rather than views them as a component of the dialogue being held with their moms and dads.

The youth in the Republican Party tend to have taken an early interest in politics and educated themselves on current controversies. The young people who don't yet have that interest need more inviting figures so that the GOP does not feel so old and stuffy. The next Republican candidate for president, whoever it may be, must know how to use the Internet. They must talk to the youth about issues that concern them, rather than talk about the youth in an abstract way. Sadly, if Sarah Palin did anything, she made Senator McCain look older and less relevant juxtaposed with her youth. The next candidate does not need to be young, but they need to know how to engage the youth in the country in order to be more inclusive.

The "base" of the Republican Party looks little different from the candidates they elect. This base will not be around forever, and the GOP needs to act now to ensure there is a generation of conservatives that support it in the future. The ideals of the Republican Party do not inherently belong to the more wizened citizens of the country, and it will be a huge task in the next four years to prove to young Americans how these values are relevant to them. If not, come 2012, it will be apparent that in the void of the Republican inclusion of the next generation, these citizens will continue to flock to the Democratic Party.

Kelly Welch is a staff writer for the Portland Spectator and a current student at PSU. She can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu.

An overbearing Oregon congress wants your freedom

In January of this coming year, 2009, there will be a state wide smoking ban in Oregon workplaces, most notably bars and restaurants. Signed by Governor Ted Kulongowski in July 2007, the new law offers exceptions only to businesses with 75% of its revenue coming from tobacco sales, and do not sell alcohol on the premises. According to Oregon.gov, gambling will also not be permitted in establishments exempt from the smoking ban.

A little more lenient than Washington's ban, requiring smokers to remain 25 ft. from windows and ventilation, the 10 ft. in Oregon will do little to accommodate the gambling addicts contributing massive amounts of cash to Oregon's budget. According to the Willamette Week, revenue losses from these reverse-ATM poker machines could punch a \$25 million hole in the lucrative \$636 million a year Oregon Lottery profit margin. Considering the inelasticity of this kind of state revenue and its helping hand during the 2001 recession, overbearing regulation could deepen our current economic hardships.

In a recent report published in the Journal of Public Economics, authors Scott Adams and Chad Cotti have linked regional smoking bans with an increase in alcohol related accidents. While the 13% increase in drunk-driving accidents is contingent on county specific regulation, Oregon's statewide ban could also fall victim to tragedy. The report claims smokers are "jurisdiction shopping", enticed by the ban to drive farther to bars not enforcing the ban or that have outdoor seating.

While Oregon's climate will impact its large smoking population's ability to jurisdiction shop, there are bars that will remain unaffected by the ban. A Portland State University campus bar, Paccini has an outdoor seating area where people can smoke 10 feet from the entrance. The indoor seating area is already smoke-free. There are many bars in Portland that are already smoke-free by choice, because not everyone wants to work and drink in the midst of carcinogenic fumes.

Despite all the huff and puff about government revenue loss and workers' rights, the issue comes down to freedom and private property. Democracy is about decentralized power and

freedom for the people. This freedom, however, is restricted by the ability of other people to enjoy their liberties. The smoking ban highlights this issue, as many people feel the rights of others are overstepping their own individual rights. In particular, the rights of service industry employees to live a long and healthy life un-jeopardized by second hand smoke.

While it may be true that some are compelled to work hazardous jobs by the lure of money, it is nonetheless a choice. Simply because the choice is unbalanced in terms of incentive does not reduce freedom, it merely illuminates opportunity cost.

The opportunity cost that encouraged Dragonfish, a local sushi restaurant and bar, to invest in a ventilation system that creates an atmosphere of refreshment despite the visible presence of smokers, is not so unrelated to the public demand represented by the petition groups that presented the initial stages of the Congressional bill. Dragonfish capitalized on consumer demand to keep smoking while making it safer, while politicians utilized public demand to legislate their goals.

The difference is that not all Oregonians had a say in the legislative process, only signed petitions gave congress the go ahead to pass the bill. The customers and employees that enter Dragonfish or any other establishment, however, have an understanding of the rules and regulations within that privately owned location.

This creates somewhat of a Democratic deficit, where publicly elected officials make rulings over privately owned property, all based on the judgment of a public good that was only symbolically supported by the public by their decision to fill in a bubble or hastily sign a petition in the Park Blocks. The fact of the matter is that Americans are losing a fundamental freedom: the protection of private property and the ability to live without centralized interference. Regardless of macroeconomic conditions, Oregonians need to reclaim democracy and give freedom back to the people.

Matthew Keenen is the Senior Editor of the Portland Spectator and a current PSU Student. He can be reached at spectate@pdx.edu

HIDDEN TIPS FOR YOUR NEXT STOTT CENTER VISIT

TIP ONE

As you walk past the recreation field and enter the Stott Center, you will see stairs descending directly in front of you. Those stairs will bring you down to the locker room. This is important because the locker room is where the cashiers are located (and a lot of people don't know about them). From the cashiers you can get:

Tickets for Campus Recreation group exercise classes (1 class: \$3; package of 5 classes: \$12.50; package of 10 classes: \$17.50)

Purchase Personal Training (\$20/ hr or \$80/ 5 sessions)

Get a locker (\$24 entitles students to check out a basket , use of a lock and towel(s), and recreational equipment)

TIP THREE:

If you climb the stairs to the roof, you will find a tennis court and a track. Eight times around the track is one mile. The small track is a great resource for building a walk/ run program. There is plenty of space to bring a yoga mat and do a work-out in the fresh air.

TIP FIVE:

The outdoor program has an outdoor trip schedule. To talk to them, go down to the basement of Smith. A couple of upcoming hikes are: Cascade Head day hike and Bagby Hot Springs day hike. They also have equipment rental for your own outdoor adventures such as camping, kayaking, rafting, and climbing.

TIP SEVEN:

Keep an eye out for the new student group Mind Body Medicine at PSU (MBM @ PSU). They will be offering workshops on stress management, yoga, and meditation.

TIP TWO:

Be sure to also look on the web site <http://www.pdx.edu/recreation> for the pool, circuit room, weight room, and group schedules. There is also a rock-climbing center at the Stott Center just down the hall from the locker rooms.

TIP FOUR:

Also, through Campus Recreation there are intramurals, the outdoor center, and recreation clubs. It offers league play, tournaments, open rec, and special events for students, faculty/ staff, and alumni at PSU. Current leagues are outdoor soccer and flag football. It is a chance to be on a team, have fun and stay fit.

TIP SIX:

If you head to the University Center Building on 6th Ave you will find the center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) where they have many wellness resources, including a registered dietitian. SHAC also offers mindfulness meditation classes Mondays at 3pm and Tuesdays at noon.

I hope that you will check out at least one of the many wellness resources available at PSU. Many of our programs are funded with your student fees, so when you do have to pay for a resource, it is extremely affordable.

-Jolene Johnson

Literacy in America Is our hubris justified?

If a school teacher from a century ago happened to learn how enormously proliferated both media and literacy would become by the 21st century, they might find their enthusiasm for the future curbed upon discovering just what it is we are reading and what role literature plays in our culture.

In the United States, we can boast almost complete adult literacy, and reading has become such a fundamental skill that proficiency is assumed when performing such basic tasks as ordering dinner or applying for a job. Reading as a recreational activity is more popular today than it has ever been in our country, and yet the reading of today – for leisure or otherwise – is very different than that of less than a century ago. While literacy certainly seems to have elevated the general population's intelligence and taste in some respects, the larger effect seems to be a progressive dumbing-down of literature itself.

Though it may not always be explained in so many words, there is all too often an implicit assumption in people's attitude towards language that denies the mutual dynamic between words and thoughts. It is absolutely not the case that one's ability to think is wholly segregated from one's ability to speak or write. While thinking and communicating are certainly separate activities, there is a very significant overlap between proficiency in either. Enhanced thinking abilities lead to enhanced reading and writing skills, and vice versa.

Cultivating one's ability to comprehend and to compose complex rhetoric bears significantly (though not always necessarily) on one's critical thinking skills. It is not an oversimplification to say that the intricate and myriad relationships between linguistic elements – once comprehended and owned – can become the very structural context with which a mind organizes complex ideas. But what benefit is conferred to a mind that indulges only the most simple and immediately gratifying literature?

The pursuit of books as entertainment and distraction has reduced the vigor of popular prose to snippets of words sometimes only barely more substantial than a road sign. The majority of adult fiction today is actually not written at levels of sophistication that match the capabilities of booksellers' target demographics, not even by a cynical long-

10 shot. Popular writers will write as simply as

they can get away with in order to make their work more accessible, less challenging, and therefore more appealing to the consumer public.

According to their "lexile scores" – an increasingly popular standardized measure of a book's difficulty – such bestselling novels as Tom Clancy's *Patriot Games*, James Patterson's *Along Came a Spider*, and even Dan Brown's celebrated *Da Vinci Code* were all written at between a fourth and fifth grade reading level. The implications of this fact are only more sharply felt when one considers that in some cases elementary – or "Common School" – curricula from the 19th century included such works as those by William Shakespeare, whereas *Hamlet* is today considered a college-level text.

**"The situation doesn't necessarily
put us in any worse position than our
ancestors from five-hundred years ago."**

It is, of course, true that education in America was less prolific in the 19th century than it is today, and reading in general was a less common activity. Consumer pressures on publication were not only weaker but of a different nature in centuries past. But even among the first European Pilgrims to settle North America, a basic education was expected for almost all children within the colonies: an education that most frequently included (in addition to the Bible) John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* – today considered a high school text.

This situation doesn't necessarily put us in any worse position than our ancestors from five-hundred years ago. Of course, in many ways it has improved our lot – literacy *has* increased, and even if we don't take advantage of literature's immense ability to improve our minds, the ability to read has been offered to countless souls, some of whom will thereby find the exalted riches of literature much more accessible. But be very careful not to fall victim to the temptation of priding oneself on the decision to read a book for recreation – for the choice of book may very well degrade the mental stimulation to little better than an hour of reality television.

Mikel McDaniel is the Copy Editor of the Portland Spectator and a current PSU Student. He can be reached at spectate@pdx.edu.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5... realize that those who believe in moderate business practices and personal values are not completely gone. Palin shouldn't have been the whole answer for the Republican Party.

The future will hold very interesting times for our leaders. I truly wish Obama the best, and I hope the Democrat super-majority here in Oregon – and the Democratic majorities in DC – all succeed and do very well, because I am an American first and a Republican second. Though I believe the Oregon Democrats'

wildest dreams will not come to pass, because so much power is difficult to wield constructively. Leadership is about making decisions that guide our country and our people.

The existence of government uncovers the desire of man: to live free from the arbitrary power of his fellow man. The human soul itself compels us to create social contracts. It is an expression of the divine spark instilled in us by our Creator. Governments are created to maximize human liberty.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." Free elections are part of the American way – a tradition refreshed by such blood. We believe we are created equal, "with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Let us never forget this.

Jeremiah Hoffman is a volunteer writer for the Portland Spectator and a PSU Alumni. He can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu

Lets take the Highroad

The election results are in and there is no question at all that Barrack Obama was the clear and decisive winner. We conservatives have had our period of mourning and it's time to get back to the business of running the country.

After the heavily contested 2000 presidential election, and again after the 2004 re-election of George W. Bush, many people on the political left started the practice of claiming that Bush was "Not their president" and doing everything possible to argue against his policies – regardless of the issue or the policy.

Already many right-wing websites have started offering t-shirts and bumper stickers with slogans ranging from "Impeach Obama" to "Not my president" and many other inflammatory statements. Disturbingly enough, many of these people who are now offering the inflammatory ephemera disparaged the left when the same was done to them.

So I urge all conservatives to begin the process of recovery and healing in three key ways. The first of which is removing all of that McCain-Palin campaign paraphernalia from your vehicle or elsewhere. The second step to healing is to make sure that conservatives stay active in the political process. One of the best ways to do this is to continue to write to legislators of both political parties at the state and federal levels, as well as doing all of the normal grassroots-style activities.

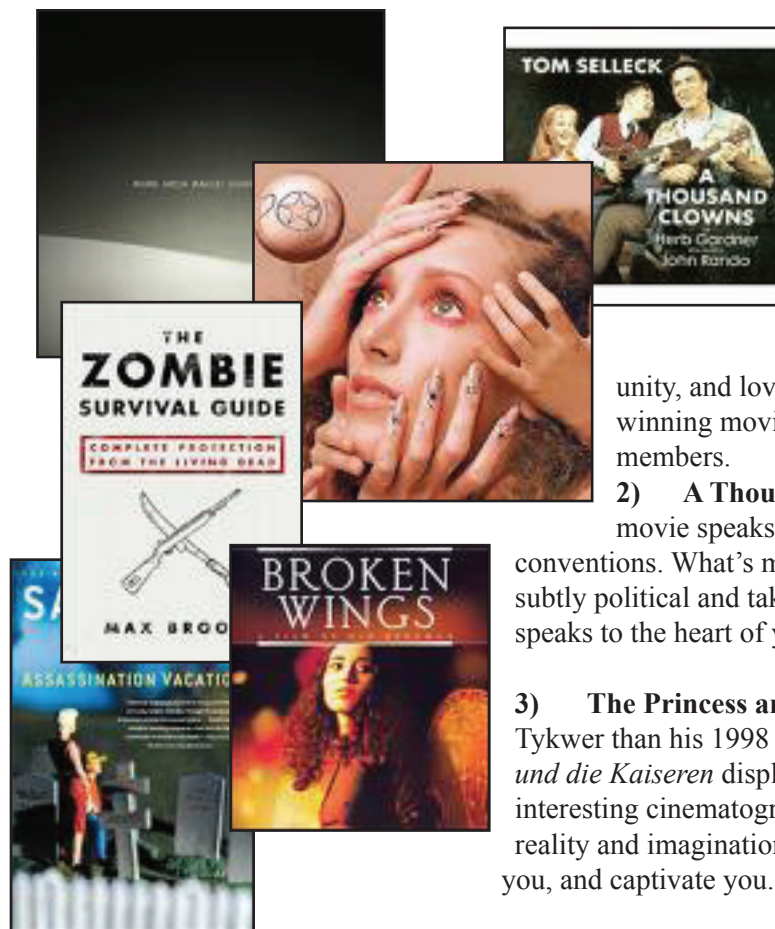
Finally, the best way that we as conservatives

can have a positive effect on the political process is through loyal opposition. By this I do not mean that we should object to every proposal created by the Obama-Biden administration, instead the conservative movement should coalesce around a small number of issues and make sure that our elected representatives work hard on them. Obama has already stated both on this campaign website and formerly on his www.change.gov website that he would like to reinstate the 1994 Assault Weapons ban as enacted by President Clinton. Obama also stated that his version would not contain the sunset clause, so it would be a permanent ban on the sale of certain equipment.

If the conservatives and Republicans in congress successfully stop this legislation by coming together as a party and pulling some of the "blue dog" Democrats, many of whom were elected in 2006, they will be credited with a large win; while the Democrats in congress will not view this as a major loss for them because at worst they end up with the status quo. Also, since the issue of gun rights is a much larger issue with Republicans than Democrats, it will be a positive for the former and only neutral for the latter.

Rather than acting like the sky is falling, I urge all Americans to rally behind the banners of bipartisanship and loyal opposition.

Michael DeVietro is a volunteer writer and a current PSU Student. He can be contacted at: spectate@pdx.edu.



MEDIA EVERY COLLEGE STUDENT SHOULD HAVE

3 You Oughta Watch:

- 1) **Broken Wings (2002).** Known in Israel by its Hebrew title, *Knafayim Shvurot*, this film is a touching look at an Israeli family that transcends cultural differences to display themes of loyalty, depression, unity, and love. Watch with a box of tissues nearby, as this award-winning movie is sure to bring on the waterworks for a few audience members.
- 2) **A Thousand Clowns (1956).** For all mavericks out there, this movie speaks to an independent spirit that flies in the face of normal conventions. What's more, through humor and excellent acting, the movie is subtly political and takes a few jabs at bureaucratic institutions (something that speaks to the heart of your loyal author).
- 3) **The Princess and The Warrior (2000).** A lesser-known film by Tom Tykwer than his 1998 sensation *Run, Lola, Run* (*Lola rennt*), *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* displays many of the same great techniques. Great music, interesting cinematography, conflicted relationships, and a blurring between reality and imagination at some points, this one is sure to shock you, impress you, and captivate you.

3 You Oughta Hear:

- 1) **"Seven Swans" by Sufjan Stevens (2004).** Known more so now for his "50 State" project, in which Stevens is attempting to write an album about each of the 50 states, Stevens' "Seven Swans" is a starkly beautiful, folksy album. Written around Biblical themes and using harmonies, a lot of acoustic guitar, and beautifully interwoven female voices, this album may stun you. This certainly destroyed my concept of Christian music being Amy Grant and Amy Grant Wannabes.
- 2) **"Ghosts I-IV" by Nine Inch Nails (2008).** A departure from traditional Nine Inch Nails albums, four instrumental albums come together on one project released in a 36-song, two-disc format. This album has peaks and valleys of intensity, soothing quietness, and songs just fun to incite dancing. I suggest buying it in a digital format so you can add songs as you wish to certain playlists (running, studying, sleeping, partying, driving, etc). With so many songs to choose from, you're bound to find a Ghost to fit your mood.
- 3) **"Haunted" by Poe (2000).** Written to memorialize her father, and as a project to compliment her brother, Mark Z. Danielewski's novel *House of Leaves*, Ann Danielewski takes the audience on an emotional ride through great music, brilliant lyrics, and a feeling of a complete story being told rather than just a disjointed album. This album gave us the radio single, "Hey Pretty," which mixed Poe's song with her brother reading from his book. This album has staying power and has remained in my favorites since its release.

3 You Oughta Read:

- 1) ***We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin (1921).** A stunning look at Soviet-era Russia, this novel was an influence for several subsequent dystopian books from the early 20th century. Taken to its logical end, collective ownership can result in drastic consequences and the loss of the individual, Zamyatin argues. This book will make you pay rapt attention, and surely entertain you.

- 2) *Assassination Vacation* by **Sarah Vowell (2005)**. Readers may find it easy to disagree with Vowell's ideologies, but no one can deny her passion for all things patriotic, presidential, and American. A well-researched book that entertains as well as informs, seeing the events in Abraham Lincoln's tragic assassination are complimented nicely with those of McKinley and Garfield, who most readers probably wouldn't know were assassinated unless they were the types of history buffs that rival Vowell herself.
- 3) *The Zombie Survival Guide* by **Max Brooks (2003)**. Written with a deadpan style of humor, this book is written with the same attention to detail that real survival manuals have, as well as the simplistic, clip-art style illustrations you might find in textbooks. Readers might need some time to get over the very scientific delivery and view it as amusing rather than boring. Don't expect a lot of gags, but the subtlety of Brook's book is what adds to its brilliance. An added bonus is that you will know exactly what to do when the streets become full of the undead. You will also find adequate ammunition to add to your defense of the 2nd Amendment, even if the Founding Fathers never pictured us needing to protect ourselves from Zombies.



Kelly Welch is a staff writer for the Portland Spectator and a current student at PSU. She can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu

Franklin Foer's book, *How Soccer Explains the World: An (unlikely) Theory of Globalization*, does not explain the world, nor does it present any theories of globalization. That being said, it is still a fascinating book that examines how soccer interacts with politics and different cultures around the world.

With chapter titles like "How Soccer Explains the Gangster's Paradise," "How Soccer Explains the Pornography of Sects," and "How Soccer Explains the Discreet Charm of Bourgeois Nationalism," Foer delves into the role soccer has played in different aspects of international politics.

Foer does a wonderful job connecting soccer to issues around the world... but fails to do more than make a connection.

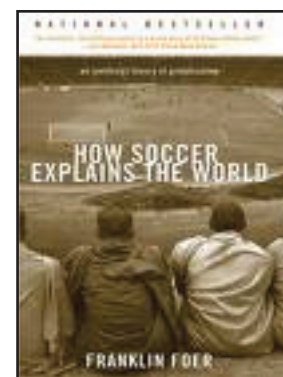
In the first chapter, Foer highlights the connection between Serbian soccer fans and the violence between Croats and Serbs. Foer illustrates how people like Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic utilized fans' energy and fervor for his own agenda. Arkan's soccer gang began as a group of overzealous fans and quickly evolved into Arkan's army, the Tigers, who went on to slaughter thousands during the war. While

Foer used soccer to provide a unique way to examine the conflict and hate that erupted in the former Yugoslavia, it does not show a causal connection between the two.

Many of the other chapters in his book are similar. Foer does a wonderful job connecting soccer to issues around the world (the Catholic-Protestant feud, exemplified in the Celtics-Rangers rivalry in Glasgow; anti-Semitism in London against Tottenham), but fails to do more than make a connection.

How Soccer Explains the World is an interesting and engaging book, but Foer fails to do what the title claims. Even those who are not soccer fans will enjoy the book, if for no other reason than the unique perspective it gives on world events.

Available At:
Powell's : \$16.95
Amazon: \$16.47



Sarah Finn is a junior double majoring in history and political science. She can be reached at spectate@pdx.edu

Hollywood's Slick Slope

I don't know about the rest of you, but the movies are increasingly becoming a depressing experience for me. Every week, I eagerly pull apart the Oregonian and make directly for the A&E section to see what's playing, only to find out that this week the latest profanity and blood-soaked thriller is balanced against a saccharine romantic comedy paired with a profanity-laced "drama" where the story's climax usually involves just that. Even when I spot a silly comedy that I might go to just for kicks, I can be guaranteed that the enterprising filmmakers are going to shoehorn in as much foul language as they can manage; and the sweeping adventure film that caught my eye is sure to have the normal menu of "f—ck", "sh—t", and all the milder varieties possible mixed in with a busty damsel-in-distress that's destined to lose her shirt, among other articles of clothing. No, I'm not a frigid conservative curmudgeon who shrivels every time I see a bit of skin or hear a curse word (otherwise I wouldn't be able to function on a college campus), but there's a point at which even the most tolerant and patient moviegoer just gets sick of all of this.

There are quite a few explanations for why all of this is going on and most of them remind one of the observation by Abraham Lincoln that "many silly reasons are given, as is usual in cases where a single good one is not to be found." One of the more popular reasons is that Hollywood is simply giving people what they want. On the surface, this is a pretty credible hypothesis: after all, if people didn't want it, why would they continue to view and patronize movies that include it and sometimes do so in such large numbers? However, there are two major flaws in this reasoning: first, it assumes that people aren't going to movies *despite* the foulness that Hollywood imposes. People can grin and bear quite a bit if they generally like the movie enough, but this isn't proof that they're happy about it. You can tolerate best friends doing and saying pretty dumb things but that's no indication that you're happy that they do and say those things.

The second flaw in the "giving them what they want" explanation is that numerous polls and studies indicate that people are tired of the poison being stuffed into movies. A consumer poll conducted by the Dove Foundation encompassing approximately 8 million families over 3 years revealed that 93% of those surveyed want to see more wholesome entertainment that they can bring the entire family to, and 70% indicated that the amount of sex, profanity, and violence in movies disturbs them. If this poll is representative of the general population (even assuming that the 8 million participants convey only the opinions of the heads of the households), this means that up to 284.2 million out of a population of 305.6 million yearn for something better, and 214 million Americans find the material distasteful. This sounds like a pretty convincing indication that audiences don't really want what the movies are serving up, but tolerate it because they generally like going to the movies

14 . Even if you assume the 8 million families to be

unrepresentative, that's about 8 million people plus their kids and spouses that are disinclined to patronize movies; if all 8 million stayed home to watch old episodes of *I Love Lucy*, that's at least \$58 million per year that the studios will never see – and that assumes that the audience stays home from just *one* movie to which they otherwise might have gone.

The mention of money actually brings me to my second point: the financial side. Another theory is that Hollywood produces these movies because they're more profitable, and the almighty dollar beats any consideration of conscience or audience disgust. This is another one of those explanations that is quite plausible-sounding. After all, movie studios are a business and businesses, by definition, exist to make as much money as they possibly can. If we're to believe those who are leery of large corporations, the big companies have no morals and would do absolutely anything to squeeze more money out of an endeavor. You might have guessed, however, that I'm going to tell you that the entirely plausible assumption is completely off-base; you'd be right. Amazingly, when someone decided to study this question, they discovered that the most profitable pictures are rated PG or G and the profitability goes downhill from there ; despite the large percentage of R-rated movies made every year, R movies are the least profitable and the most likely to lose a studio money.

This study was conducted in June of 2000 by economists Arthur De Vany (University of California, Irvine) and W. David Walls (School of Economics and Finance, University of Hong Kong) who concluded that "an executive seeking to trim the 'downside' risk and increase the 'upside' possibilities in a studio's film portfolio could do so by shifting production dollars out of R-rated movies into G, PG, and PG-13 movies." This study squares with film critic and talk show host Michael Medved's observation that among all the movies made in the 1980's, the only R-rated movie in the top ten was *Beverly Hills Cop* although more than 60% of the titles in the 80's were R-rated. One movie out of over half of the movies released made big money. At Mr. Medved's request, Rob Cain of the *Screen Actor* magazine looked at 1,010 domestic releases from 1983 to 1989 and found that the median box office gross for a G movie was \$17.3 million, a PG movie was \$13 million, and R movies were \$8.3 million. At this point, we can safely dispose of the idea that profanity-laced, sex-saturated, blood-soaked movies are made because they're so profitable for the industry; the facts say something totally different.

So what do I believe explains the current state of affairs? Frankly, I'm starting to get the feeling that foulness is viewed as a cheap and easy way to win respectability for a film that is otherwise ho-hum or ordinary. I say this because it seems like the only non-kid movies that are immune to being stuffed with junk to shock the common people are ones that are notably powerful and epic, needing no help to win admiration and devotion from audiences. See every Star Wars movie or even the "Star Wars trilogy" of this generation: The

Lord of the Rings. People stuffed theaters to overflowing to see these movies and the most explicit “sex” was a kiss, the violence was relatively sterile, and nary a profane word to be heard. Movies like these didn’t need the low-class respectability-enhancers of sex, violence, and profanity to make their millions. I would point out that even the latest two Batman movies, while dark and violent, are pretty clean in the profanity and sexuality departments and people adored them, especially the second one.

Above all else, the thing about profanity and sexuality in movies that gets under my skin is that it’s often totally accessory, unneeded and actually detracts from the “coolness” value of the movie. It can, and often is, a situation where the obscenity makes no sense and actually sounds worse than the alternative; my favorite example of this is the movie *The Rock* where Sean Connery’s character refers to another as “you piece of sh—t.” When this was rebroadcast on TV, they replaced the obscenity with the word “dirt” and frankly, the line sounded much better, having an improved

flow and taking advantage of the way the word sounds with Connery’s unique accent.

I could go on and on about this but you get the picture. The real tragedy, as I see it, is that a culture of grudging acceptance has grown up around the practices of Hollywood. If a group of concerned people protest a profane movie, they’re marginalized as intolerant and uptight censors, getting all worked up over a silly movie. Hollywood is apparently immune to people voting with their dollars and even jacks up the price of a ticket to make up for the revenue they lose by their bizarre obsession with the profane. If culture of acceptance becomes more widespread, I fear that there will be far too many potentially good movies in the future that make me, and millions of others, wish that *McHale’s Navy* was on tonight.

Keith Moore is a volunteer writer for the Portland Spectator and a current PSU Student. He can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu

Failure and Hyphenated Dis-Unity

Failure is powerful, but even a failed attempt is not a complete loss. For many of us who have allowed failure to shape our lives for the better, progress has come often.

Many Americans feel that the Republican Party has failed. This isn’t about losing the 2008 Presidential elections, and this isn’t about the Gulf War that started in the 90s, or the War on Terror. This is about Americans failing as bi-partisans, non-partisans and everyone in between. Our biggest failure is dis-unity.

When is it that we witness and experience the most dis-unity in this country? It’s not just every time we bring up politics. The peak happens during each election. We see extremists from all parties trying to uncover each other’s dirtiest failures and weaknesses. We’ll I’m afraid that our greatest weakness is also dis-unity.

In its simplest form, our nation is a Democratic-Republic, democratic in the sense that all Americans possess individual freedom under a system that is by the people and for the people, and a republic in the sense of communally serving all of the people. Our democracy can not subsist without our republic and our republic can not subsist without our democracy. The same logic exists with our political parties; one can not subsist without the others.

But realistically, America will always have a barrier that will divide its people. That barrier is created by differences in beliefs about what decisions

our government should make, but here is where we can alleviate that barrier: by not judging everyone for the decisions of a few.

John McCain is a Republican and many people from the right have negated this fact by stating that he *isn’t* conservative enough. Others from the left have said that John McCain was not elected because he *is* a Republican and he would have been President Bush III. This is what I mean by disunity by all parties.

We may not unite all parties to think in similar terms, but we can unite all Americans in being proud of our political system. We can start by asking our fellow Republicans: what can *we* do to unify our party so that we may serve our country more efficiently?

A Republican classmate once remarked that we need to stop looking towards the past and wishing for Ronald Reagan to come back. Each of us remembers Ronald Reagan in our own way and we must always respectfully honor his contributions to this world. But my classmate is right. We need to start looking towards the future and, as a party, we must seek those blooming Republicans who will serve our nation for the better and who will start unifying our party and America.

By acknowledging our many failures and by learning from those failures, I believe we will someday reach unity as a nation, and we can start by strengthening our party. I ask you, how will you show your pride for America?

Teresa Lopez is a volunteer writer for the Portland Spectator and a current student at PSU. She can be reached at: spectate@pdx.edu.

THE PORTLAND SPECTATOR



WANTS YOU!

The Portland Spectator magazine is in need of Design Editors, Marketing Directors, Writers and Advertising volunteers.

School credit can be earned for each of these positions. This is a great opportunity to develop work experience with tangible application.

This monthly magazine gives students much needed experience to be applied to the real world.

To apply, e-mail spectate@pdx.edu, or come visit us in the Sub-Basement of Smith Memorial Student Union, Room 29.

The
Portland
Spectator